

Friday, June 26, 2009

275th Cobra flight, 286th PIC, 4 landings

Takeoff: 7:57am Landing: 8:50 am

Takeoff: 10:27am Landing: 11:20 am

Total Airtime: 1.8hrs

Sunday, July 5, 2009

276th Cobra flight, 287th PIC, 2 landings

Airtime 50min .8

Total PIC Time : 699.6 Total Logged Time 720.8

I have been steadily working all spring on installing my Mode-C transponder. It was installed months ago, but I have been held up installing the antenna. Or to be more precise, the antenna shielding. The following words in the installation manual inspired me to do a good job.

*"The transponder antenna outputs high level of RF energy, and should be located at least 1m away from **vulnerable** parts of the human body, or be separated by a metal panel."*

The only place I could mount the antenna was on the underside of the trike, a few inches from a very vulnerable part of my body. I had to devise some sort of shielding, and a way to securely attach it to the underside of the trike. After several iterations, I settled on a 2'x3' piece of sheet metal for the shielding and a 18 inch aluminum pizza pan for the back plane.

I made an appointment with "Rudi" at avionics stop at Double Eagle Airport for the TSO inspection and sticker so that I could legally turn it on. My appointment was for 7am. I drove down to Belen early to make some last adjustments to my anchor points that held the shielding on the bottom of my trike. I definitely did not want it coming loose and going through my prop. In the process disaster struck. I broke the transponder antenna. I was so disgusted with myself, I almost got in my car and drove back to town to go to back work. Then I thought, "It's a nice morning, you have the day off, you might as well go for a flight." As I preflighted another thought came to me. "If you are going on a flight, why not pack all your tools and fly up to Double Eagle, maybe Rudi has a spare antenna."

So that's what I did. Rudy did have a spare antenna and I installed it on the spot, and got the transponder inspected and TSO'd.

Here is the new transponder, squawking 1200, the VFR code.

I flew back down the Puerco, looking at the Red Spot. It getting thermally by the time I landed.

I was amazed how well the day turned out. The day was a good life lesson to not get discouraged, keep your options open and enjoy flying.





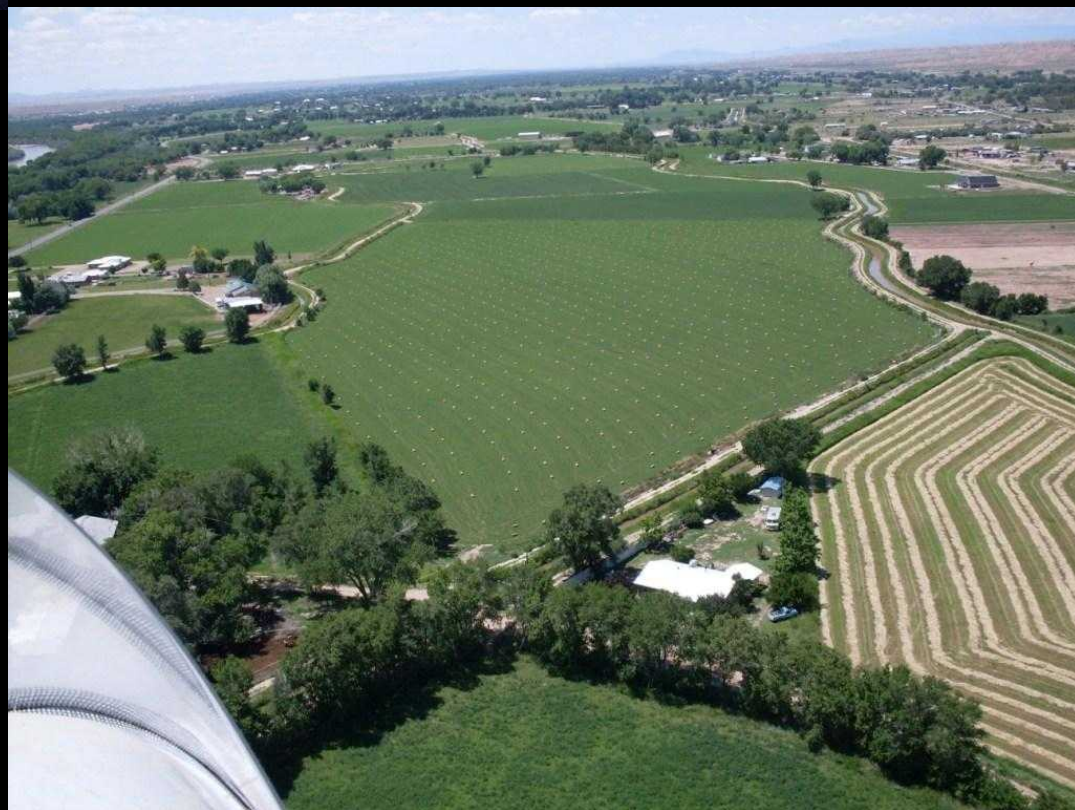
A few days later, Curt, a long time member of the Albuquerque Ultralight Association crashed his ELSA 3-axis ultralight near Tome Hill, a mile or two from Mid Valley Airport. Curt survived and will probably make a full recovery. He had an engine out over the farms near Tome, and ended up crashing into a "junkyard."

He was pinned inside the cockpit, but managed to get to his cell phone and call 911. But he did not know his exact location. For nearly an hour and he lost blood and was slipping into shock, he tried to direct emergency responders to his location on his cell phone. Fortunately, they found him before he passed out.

I noticed an ad in the paper for SPOT, a personal locator beacon. The unit was free if you signed up for two years of service.

I bought one and set it up to email and text message my friends and family for non-emergency help. If I am hurt, I'll push the 911 button. Where to mount it? After some thought, I decided to strap it to my leg where it will always be in reach.

I went up for a SPOT test flight over the Rio Grande Valley. I'll use it next week on a 4 day trip to Alamosa and Creede.



Here is my GPS track for these two flights.

— Xponder TSO flight to Double Eagle

— SPOT checkout flight in the Rio Grande Valley

